The Weekly Colonist.

Tuesday, February 16, 1864.

THE HEIR TO THE THRONE.

We must go a very long way back to find a precedent for the celebration of the birth of a son to the Prince and Princess of Wales. It is now many years since a Prince of England was born whilst his father enjoyed the title of Prince of Wales. Our fellow citizens are too loyal to hold two opinions on the desirability of marking the event in some becoming way. Many amongst us can well remember the rejoicings throughout the length and breadth of England when Albert Edward was born; and no doubt similar rejoicings have, ere this, heralded the birth of Queen Victoria's grandson. We trust our townsmen will not forget that it rests with them to set the ball in motion; doubtless if our worthy Mayor received a requisition requesting him to do so, he would call a meeting to take the opinion of the inhabitants of Victoria as to how this event should be celebrated. Our citizens have ever proved themselves loyal and desirous of paying all honor to the Royal family, and we feel sure that they will do their utmost to second and carry out any proposal for the due celebration of the birth of England's Prince and Dublin's Duke.

A NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION.

We are much gratified to be enabled to place before our readers the following requisition and reply. The good citizens of Victoria will now have an opportunity of displaying their attachment and loyalty to the Queen and her august family; and we trust whatever may be the form decided upon for congratulating the Royal Family on the nativity of an heir to the Throne that it will be worthy of that great and auspicious occasion.

Requisition.

To THOMAS HARRIS, Esq., Mayor:

Whereas, it has pleased God in his goodness to still further perpetuate the line of the Royal Family in the person of a Son born to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, we beg to request your Worship to call a Public Meeting, at as early a date as possible to take into consideration the best means of congratulating the Queen Mother and the Prince and Princess of Wales, upon this happy and auspicious event.

VICTORIA, V. I., Feb. 9, 1864.

Solim Franklin, M.P.P.
James Trimble, M.P.P.
D. Babington Ring,
J C Ridge,
A J Welch,
J. Moorhead,
M R Webb,
W H Quinney,
C F Gillingham, M D
J P Davies,
Joseph W Trutch,
H J McDonnell,
D Tarbet, M D,
Wm H Thain,
Charles Gowan,
George Cruickshank, and 150 others.

Richd. Lewis,
Robert Wallace,
W. H. Franklyn, J.P.
Robt. Horne, Capt.
J. A. Alfred Elliott,
James Dickson, MD.
E W Green,
C G Wylly,
T Roper,
William Downie,
W J Roper,
John S Bishop,
G J Wight,
W E Stronach,

Reply.

BROAD STREET, VICTORIA, V. I.
February 9, 1864.

GENTLEMEN,—I beg to acknowledge your communication of the 9th inst., and in reply thereto, I appoint that a Public Meeting be held at the Victoria Theatre on Saturday the 13th inst., at two p. m.

THOMAS HARRIS,
Mayor.

ADJOURNED INQUEST.

The inquest on the body of Hobbs, the drayman, was resumed on Monday. Dougherty made his appearance before the Coroner for the first time, with his head bound up, and looking rather weak. Mr. Ring appeared for the prisoner.

Mr. Sparrow, Post Office clerk, sworn—stated that hearing a noise on St. Ours' Wharf, he looked out and saw Dougherty and Hobbs scuffling; Hobbs broke loose and ran away; I went down to the wharf and met Hobbs coming up, who exclaimed he had been stabbed; he went to his dray and took one of the bars, apparently intending to strike Dougherty, but being advised not to do it, he put back the bar. Both men were bleeding about the face; Dougherty had a knife in his hand; I turned to leave the place when I heard an exclamation and looking back I saw Hobbs strike Dougherty on the head with a dray bar, knocking him down insensible. Dougherty's friends assisted him, and Hobbs got on his dray and left the wharf.

Capt. Gardner, Pilot, sworn—Was on St. Ours' Wharf and heard an altercation between Hobbs and Dougherty; heard Hobbs say to Dougherty "if you call me a son of a b—— again, I'll strike you." Was walking away, when hearing a voice turned back and saw Hobbs pressing Dougherty back on the dray and striking him; Dougherty sung out "take him off, I have had enough." I turned to go again the men having parted, when I heard the bystanders say let them fight it out, and looking back I saw Hobbs holding Dougherty, and crying out that he was stabbed. Hobbs then threw him off and ran into the store, pulling down his trowsers and showing the wound; he then went to his dray and took one of the bars, but was advised not to use it. Witness walked up the wharf, and hearing a noise, looked back and saw Dougherty lying on the ground; did not see Hobbs strike him.

Mr. Jabob Bramwell, marine engineer, sworn—This witness corroborated part of the previous evidence.

Two other witnesses were examined, but nothing of importance elicited.

Dr. Trimble examined—Had attended deceased for a wound in the thigh; Hobbs came to my office stating that he was stabbed; I looked at the wound, which appeared to be an incised wound; I dressed it, and told him to keep quiet and let it heal. I saw him next day, when he seemed to be doing tolerably well. On Sunday I was told that Hobbs was taken very ill with a severe pain in his bowels; I saw him and found him showing symptoms of deep seated inflammation. Dr. Haggin was sent for, and a consultation was held, and the wound examined; it was in the centre of the thigh, about two inches long and four inches deep. The man died the same night. I have no doubt that the wound was the cause of his death.

D. B. Reid, gaoler, sworn—Stated that on January 15th, John Dougherty was brought to gaol charged with stabbing Hobbs.

Dr. Haggin corroborated the evidence of Dr. Trimble; made a post-mortem examination of the body and found it enormously swollen; examined the wound but found no large vessel injured.

After half an hour's consultation the jury turned a verdict of manslaughter.

RETROGRADE POLICY.

In these days of progress it is somewhat surprising to find anyone connected with the government of a country taking "two steps backward rather than one forward," yes we cannot help feeling that the new Legislative Council of British Columbia has by its recent action placed itself in this category. We learn from the reports of the proceedings that one of their first steps was to pass a vote excluding the press from attendance at their sittings. It is a novelty certainly in the arrangements of an Assembly whose rules ought to be grounded on the English constitution, and whose members are supposed to be the representatives of the people, that the sittings should be held with closed doors. Our own Legislative Council, it is true, follows the same plan, but they are not supposed to be moulded on the same system as the House of Commons. We have always advocated free discussion and publicity to all the debates which take place in either House, and it is with regret that we find our Legislative Council so persistently continuing their secret deliberations. There may, however, be a reason for their desire to keep their doors closed, as we doubt whether the publication of their deliberations, judging from the results, would be edifying to the community. Either this secret deliberative Council consume all their time in discussions, or they meet very seldom, and to very little purpose; for it is certain that they get through very little work. We cannot compliment the House of Assembly for any vast amount of public business transacted since they met for its despatch; but they have transacted *something*. But so far as the Legislative Council are concerned we cannot tell what they have done; so far, however, as we are able to judge, we should say very little.

The Council of British Columbia is constituted on a different principle; some of the members belonging to that modern Star Chamber are returned by the people of the Colony, and yet on the very moment of taking their seats, they give up one of the rights of the people, by refusing them admission to hear the discussions on the laws which they meet to pass. We are at a loss to understand what is the reason of this inattention to the wishes of the public. Are the government ashamed of the proceedings which they wish the Council to inaugurate (for we understand that most if not all of the popular members were in favor of open debates), or is it the Council themselves who are ashamed of the share which they take in the business? Whichever is the cautious branch of the government of the sister colony which would exclude the public from any participation in the discussion of public affairs, we can only address the same warning to them; if the desire of the government is to carry on the administration of the affairs of the colony in a manner which will be satisfactory to the community at large, it will not suffice to make a show of admitting the representatives of the people into the Council, if the public themselves are to be excluded from the right of hearing and knowing what takes place on the discussion of laws which vitally affect the interests of the people. We are no democrats, but inasmuch as we have in common with all inhabitants of Victoria, an interest in the prosperity of British Columbia, we should certainly prefer to see a little less of the Star Chamber system prevailing in the Council of that Colony.

FATAL ACCIDENT.—The *Seattle Gazette* says: A horrible accident occurred at Port Ludlow Mills on Friday night, January 22d, which a correspondent describes as follows, but does not give the unfortunate man's name. He was mending a belt that was hanging loose on the main shaft; he had the belt laced, and asked a man near by to hand him his knife that was lying a few feet from him on the floor; the man stooped to get the knife, and, turning round to give it to him, discovered that he was gone. The belt caught on a key on the shaft, and in an instant wound up on the pulley, carrying the man along with it, and killing him instantly. It was the most horrible sight I ever saw; half his head was knocked off, and his brains beat out against the beams. One leg was torn off, and in fact there was scarcely six inches of a bone left together in his body.

A GOOD MOVE.—We learn that it is the intention of the British Columbian Government to establish a mounted police force, for the protection of the main routes of travel between the mines and the lower country. The horses and arms belonging to the defunct Gold Escort have not been disposed of, and will be available to equip the new body. We presume the organization of the corps will be similar to that adopted in Australia, where the plan has been found absolutely necessary for the safety of the traveling public, and has worked admirably. Although British Columbia has been remarkable among mining countries for its comparative freedom from the crimes which are usually attendant on the eager pursuit of gold, still the few startling and atrocious murders which have been committed, have abundantly demonstrated the necessity for the establishment of some such force as that contemplated, and we are sure the proposal will receive the ready assent of the Legislative Council, and be greeted with the hearty approval of the traveling community generally.

THE SANTIAGO CALAMITY—ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS.

"THE OFFERING UP OF THE EVENING SACRIFICE."—EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

A dreadful visitation has fallen upon us. Truly this is "a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy." The voice of lamentation is heard all over the land, the bitter weeping of fathers, husbands and lovers, for those who were the joy and brightness of their life, that refuses to be comforted because they are not.

Hundreds of young girls—only yesterday radiant and beautiful in the luxuriant bloom of the fresh, hopeful spring of life—to-day calcined, hideous corpses, horrible, loathsome to the sight, impossible to be recognized.

The 8th of December was a great triumph for the clergy of the church of the Jesuits in Santiago. An enthusiastic audience filled every nook. There were hardly any men there, but 3,000 women comprising the flower of the beauty and fashion of the capital were at the feet of the ecclesiastics, very many against the will of fathers and husbands—but that of course only showed forth the power and might of the Gospel.

Never had such pyrotechny been seen, before—20,000 lights, mostly camphene, in long festoons of colored globes, blazed the church into a hall of fire. But the performance had not yet begun when the crescent of fire at the foot of the gigantic image of the Virgin, over the high altar overflowed, and, climbing up the muslin draperies and pasteboard devices to the wooden roof, rolled forth a torrent of flame. The suddenness of the fire was awful. The dense mass of women, frightened out of their senses—numbers fainting and all entangled by their long swelling dresses—rushed, as those who knew that death was at their heels, to the one door which soon became choked up. Fire was everywhere. Streaming along the wooden ceiling, it flung the paraffine lamps hung in rows there among the struggling women. In a moment the gorgeous church was a sea of flame. Michael Angelo's fearful picture of Hell was there, but exceeded.

Help was all but impossible. A Hercules might have strained his strength in vain to pull one from the serried mass of frenzied wretches who, piled one above another as they climbed over to reach the air, wildly fastened the grips of death upon any one escaping, in order that they might be dragged out with them. Those who longed to save them were doomed to bear the most harrowing sight that ever seared human eye-balls. To see mothers, sisters—tender and timid women, dying that dreadful death that appals the stoutest heart of man—within one yard of salvation—within one yard of men who would have given their lives over and over again for them. It was maddening—the screaming and wringing of hands for help as the remorseless flames came on; and then—save when some already dead with fright were burnt in ghastly indifference—their horrible agony—some in prayer, some tearing their hair and battering their faces. Women seized in the embrace of the flames were seen to undergo a transformation as though by an optical illusion—first dazzingly bright—then horribly lean and shrunk up—then black statues rigidly fixed in a writhing attitude.

The fire, imprisoned by the immense thickness of the walls, had devoured everything combustible by 10 o'clock. Then, defying the sickening stench, people came to look after their lost ones. O what a sight the fair, placid moon looked down upon! Close packed crowds of calcined, distorted forms, wearing the fearful expression of the last pang, whose smile was once a heaven—the ghastly phalanx of black statues twisted in every variety of agony, stretching out their arms, as imploring mercy—and then of the heap that had choked up the door, multitudes with the lower parts perfectly untouched, and some all a shapeless mass, but with one arm or foot unscathed. The silence, after those piercing screams were hushed in death, was horrible. It was the silence of the grave, unbroken but by the bitter wail or fainting cry. Two thousand souls had passed through that ordeal of fire to the judgment-seat of God.

Heroic acts of sublime daring have not been wanting. Enduring gratitude has been excited in every Chilian heart by the gallant efforts of Mr. Nelson, the Minister of the United States, his countryman Mr. Meiggs and several other foreigners. There were generous men who defied the fury of the flames to save lives, and some of these died martyrs to their noble hearts. An Englishman or American, it is unknown which, was seen to rush through the flames, to seize in his powerful arms a lady, stride with her a little way, and then his hair in a blaze and choked with smoke fell back into the volcano never to rise again. A young lady named Ocella, having in vain implored some bystanders on her knees, to save her mother, rushed in and shortly afterwards miraculously issued forth, bearing her glorious load. A young lady of the name of Solar, just before the smoke suffocated her, had the presence of mind to knot her handkerchief round her leg, so that her corpse might be recognized.

The population of Santiago, so supine and so priest ridden, is fired with indescribable indignation at the monstrous conduct of the priests. The public conscience holds them guilty of the death of all these victims—and particularly the mountebank Ugarte, the inventor of the *Virgin's Postoffice* imposture, because by collecting together all the material most likely to produce a fire—a countless number of lights, pasteboard scenery and muslin hangings, admitting a vast crowd, and covering the one door open with a screen, they took every pains to bring about this tragedy. When the fire broke out and people were escaping by the sacristy, they blocked up this door, to devote themselves the more undisturbedly to saving ther gim-cracks. The list of things saved makes one's blood run cold. What the priests saved, what they have put away in cigar shops and the houses in front are—a gilt image, some wooden saints, a sacred sofa or two, some books, chalices, silver candlesticks, and a great deal of sacred matting and carpet!

This being the third time that this church has filled our homes with weeping, all with one voice demand that it should never be rebuilt; but the priests, foolishly defiant and despotic as ever, threaten to let off their miserable mediæval pop-guns at those they term the sacrilegious alienators of holy ground. Their audacity has even led them to an attempt to appeal to violence. On the 11th they appeared on the scene to take possession of the blackened ruins and insult public opinion by chanting masses for the souls of those whose bodies they had destroyed; but the sentinels drove them off with the butt ends of their muskets.

The government has shown no energy, and one minister is unhappily a creature of the clergy; but the people, in whose hearts, as having wives and daughters, there dwells an idea of right something from God that priests have not yet succeeded in poisoning—have been in earnest, and the government has had to follow and yield to pressure. The decree has gone forth, and not one stone of that accursed church shall be left on another. The public contempt and horror of these priests increase with their insolence and inhumanity.

They preach that the irreparable loss of so many of the fairest and most virtuous of Chile's virgins and matrons is a special mercy and miracle of Mary, who wished to take them at once without delay to her bosom.—One monster exults openly at that which has stamped eternal grief and horror on our hearts, "Because Chile wanted a supply of saints and martyrs."

Oh, as we write, our eyes fill with tears.—Nothing can console us in this affliction; we can think of nothing less but of our loss—of those who never will come back to us. But still there will have ensued some good, if the dark, degrading dominion of the priests shall have melted away in the smoke of that awful burnt sacrifice, which, laden with the dying breath of 2,000 victims, rolled up to accuse Ugarte and his accomplices of murder, before the throne of God.

After saving their trash, these specimens of the good shepherds that give their life for their sheep, flew away in company with the owls and bats that infested the ancient walls except that one priest favored the agonizing victims with his absolution, and Ugarte requested them to "die happy, because they went direct to Mary." They then forsook the scene, and in that awful night, when fainting women and desperate men strewed the streets, and writhing forms that a few hours ago were graceful, beautiful maidens, moaned and died in chemists' shops, not a priest was to be seen to whisper a word of Christ's comfort to the dying ear, or hold the precious crucifix before the glazing eye.

No, not so, for the priest of nature was there—woman—a ministering angel in the dark hour tended and soothed as usual; one young lady, God bless her! tore up all her underclothing to make bandages, and bound up the wounds as only woman can. All this awful night, all that reminded of the clergy was the incessant tolling of bells, about the only thing they could do to increase the horrors of the scene.

The following account, from a Chilean paper, of the appalling catastrophe at Santiago, contains some particulars not yet given. The calamity is of such astounding proportions, and the horrors of the scene are so fearful, that every additional incident is read with the deepest interest. There is an important moral in the story, concerning the theatrical display of religious ceremonies, that no one can miss. Says our authority:—

One of those awful visitations which from time to time afflict nations with eternal mourning, took place on Tuesday, December 8th—the festival of the Immaculate Conception—in what was the Church of the Jesuits, in the capital. A magnificent temple reduced to ashes, hundreds of dear lives sacrificed, the whole city weeping its lost ones—such is the picture Santiago offers us since the fatal night of the 8th of December, the anniversary of another mortal catastrophe—the battle of Longomilla.

On the commemoration of the Immaculate Conception, the last of the festivities of the Month of Mary, the most popular and frequented of all our solemnities, thousands of fair devotees thronged to the last performance which was to eclipse all that had preceded. At six in the evening the spacious steps and part of the open space before the church swarmed with ladies in veils frantically struggling to enter a temple where not one more could be made room for.

A few minutes before seven, and when the religious performance was about to commence, they were still lighting the last lights in the chancel, when the portable gas in the half moon of canvas and wood, that formed the pedestal of a colosal image of the Virgin Mary began to burn one of the extremities of that apparatus. Some rushed upon the rising flame and succeeded in smothering it, but by a fatal rebound, the gas, compressed by the effort, burst out with redoubled vigor at the other extremity of the fatal half moon.—Immediately a fierce flame rushed up. The persons who thronged the chancel flew towards the sacristy crying *water! water!* whilst the women who filled the nave arose in tumultuous confusion screaming for help. The fire spread with wonderful rapidity to the reredos of wood and hangings, and thence, attracted by the current of air that always circulates between the upper boarding and the roof, rolled through the church. In a few moments the ceiling was a cloud of fire.

In the meantime, the men had succeeded in escaping, for in this church the sexes were separated by an iron grating, and the women had fled as far as the middle of the church, in the midst of the most fearful confusion. But the headlong hurry, the fainting, the obstruction of the bell-shaped dresses, and the frantic eagerness to gain the street, formed an impenetrable barrier before the two doors which alone, by a culpable imprudence, gave access to the free air towards the open place in front, and the small court on the west side of the church. That obstacle was the barrier of death.

And now what appeared most horrible was, that seeing the salvation of lives within the reach of our arms, it was impossible to save even one of the victims, piled up one upon another, on the very threshold. Hardly had the noble men who devoted themselves to save some lives at the peril of their own, seized by the arms or clothes a prostrate form, than the other women, wild with terror and the nearness of the fire, clutched the victim about to be saved, and, in some cases, dragged those who came to help them into that fiery vortex. It was almost impossible to extricate even one from that great heap of despairing wretches, and undo that ghastly knot. But the fire accomplished that which baffled man; and the passage into the consumed church was not cleared until that impenetrable phalanx of precious, beautiful life was a handful of cinders. The catastrophe is horrible—most cruel. At midnight we visited the smoking ruins of the fated temple, so soon a silent charnel-house, and by the light of the lantern every step showed to the appalled gaze fearful groups of carbonized corpses that preserved still the supplicating or despairing attitude of their frightful martyrdom. Although there are events beyond the foresight of man and beyond also his responsibility, we must advert that there has been the most culpable recklessness; religion has among us been turned into an intoxicating mania, new-fangled mummeries have replaced Christian worship—and thanks to the seductions of one species of fanaticism fanned by others, the religious world crowds with a kind of frenzy to those performances whose splendor is estimated by the multitude of lights, that is to say, the multitude of perils accumulated every night.

We demand that this terrible lesson be taken to heart. No more night services! No more disorder, no more immorality, no more religious mobs of crazy people crowding to push and fight their way into the fashionable churches, under the delusion that they are performing a religious feat of merit, instead of committing an act of disgusting irreverence. We demand from this very day that all the churches be shut up on the disappearance of the light of day—the safeguard of all order—of all safety—and in particular of all public morality attacked a thousand times over by those disgusting scenes which especially in our most solemn festivals are the subject of the just complaint, the indignant condemnation of all respectable people.

Let the local authority interfere in the policy of the churches, as regards their construction and their apparatus for lighting. In what church, owing to the reckless use of a multitude of lights in connexion with clouds of gauze and towering gim-cracks of painted card board are there not at least once a year alarms of fire? Dictate regulations that shall avoid confusion, and the admittance of more spectators than the place will hold; that shall facilitate the speedy evacuation of every church; that shall guarantee even ventilation and security—in a word, worship according to the practice of all civilized nations, and not according to those atrocious religious manias that mislead our women.

If there is anything that needs energetic curbing, it is fanaticism—the most energetic of passions. Raze to the ground that fatal temple, which fortunately is the property of the State, that its walls, twice in the space of twenty years blackened with the smoke of calamities that have carried desolation and mourning throughout the nation, evoke not to the passer-by a horrible memory, to every family the shade of a loved victim.

With a heart rent by so cruel an affliction, we send forth to all our country—to all humanity—the wail of this mighty sorrow. God receive it in His great mercy, and may he who wipes all tears from all eyes, send down some little comfort for those who weep a mother or a wife!

SANTIAGO, December 14.

Before three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour appointed to petition the President of the Republic for the demolition of the walls of the church of "the Company," a numerous and select meeting of all the social classes had collected in the open space in front of the ruins. The decree of demolition having been signed by His Excellency, Don Guillermo Matta ascended to the upper story of the Congress House and thence addressed the people, reading the decree promulgated a few hours before, and calling for a *viva* for His Excellency, which was enthusiastically given by the immense assembly that filled the square.

The orator proceeded then to protest in the name of religion and humanity against those who attempted to qualify as sacrilegious the people's longing for the demolition. "To wreak its revenge on us," he added, "superstition tries to lash and goad the ignorant passions of the rabble into violence; but its feeble efforts are in vain, because we have never strayed from the great principles of pure religion. Fanaticism spreads its murky nets against the happiness and peace of society. Let us quench its firebrands with the sincerity and nobleness of our intentions."

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